

REMARKS

This Reply and Amendment is intended to be completely responsive to the non-final Office Action mailed on April 5, 2006.

Claims 1-56 are pending in this Application. Claims 21-24, 26-40, 42-44 and 46-56 are allowed. Claims 1-8, 12-15, 17-20, 25, 41 and 45 currently stand rejected. Claims 9-11 are objected to.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite subject matter that the Applicants believe is allowable and overcomes the rejection. Independent Claim 21 has been amended in response to an objection to the drawings. Dependent Claims 4, 6, 7, 9, 18, 25, 40, 41, 45, 52 and 53 have been cancelled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits, in order to expedite issuance of allowable subject matter. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue allowance of each of the cancelled dependent claims in further proceedings.

The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present Application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Drawings

In Section 1 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) relating to features specified in the Claims.

The Applicants have cancelled dependent Claims 4, 6, 7, 18, 25, 40, 41, 45, 52 and 53 without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits, in order to expedite issuance of allowable subject matter. The Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of these dependent claims is fully described in the specification and reserve the right to pursue patentability of these dependent claims and to provide amended drawings in further proceedings.

The Applicants have amended independent Claim 21 and dependent Claims 2, 3 and 49 so that the feature(s) identified by the Examiner are no longer positively recited. The Applicants respectfully submit that the feature(s) are fully described in the specification and reserve the right to pursue patentability of these features and to provide amended drawings in further proceedings.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

Specification

In Section 2 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner objected to the Abstract as not being in narrative form.

The Applicants have amended the specification by providing a replacement Abstract (attached hereto). The replacement Abstract is intended to place the Abstract in narrative form and overcome the objection.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request approval of the replacement Abstract and withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

Allowed/Allowable Subject Matter

In Section 11 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner stated that Claims 21-24, 26-40, 42-44 and 46-56 are allowed. The Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of these claims.

In Section 12 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner stated that "Claims 9-11 and 16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include subject matter recited in dependent Claim 9 (now cancelled). Dependent Claims 10 and 11 have been amended to depend from Claim 1 for consistency. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 1 is in condition for allowance and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of independent Claim 1, and dependent Claims 2, 3, 5, 8, 10-17 and 19-20 as they depend from independent Claim 1 (as amended).

In Section 13 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner stated that “Claims 4, 6-7, 25, 41 and 45 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue patentability of these claims in future proceedings.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2

In Section 4, the Examiner rejected dependent Claims 4, 6-7, 25, 41 and 45 as being indefinite.

The Applicants cancelled dependent Claims 4, 6, 7, 25, 41 and 45, without prejudice, to expedite issuance of allowed/allowable subject matter. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections have been overcome, and request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In Sections 6-7, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-2, 5, 8, 12-15 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 1,516,772 (EP ‘772).

The Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include a “conductor strip” as previously recited in dependent Claim 9, and as indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. The Applicants respectfully submit that EP ‘772 does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of subject matter recited in Claim 1 (as amended) including (among others) a “conductor strip.” Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection to Claims 1-2, 5, 8, 12-15 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In Section 10, the Examiner rejected dependent Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of EP '772 and U.S. Patent No. 6,648,393 ("Milnar et al.").

The Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 (as previously discussed) to recite a combination of subject matter that the Applicants believe is patentable over the cited references. Dependent Claim 3 depends from independent Claim 1 (as amended). Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection to dependent Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

* * *

The Applicants respectfully submit that each and every outstanding objection and rejection to the pending claims has been overcome, and the Application is in condition for allowance. Claims 1-3, 5, 8, 10-17, 19-24, 26-39, 42-44, 46-51 and 54-56 are pending in this Application. Claims 21-24, 26-40, 42-44 and 46-56 have been allowed. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the remaining pending Claims.


The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if the Examiner believes that a telephone interview or Examiner's amendment would advance the prosecution of the present Application.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, the Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

Respectfully submitted,

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